

# WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,  
and workers in the District of Columbia*

*Friday, December 31, 2004*

## CHIEF RAMSEY THANKS MPDC MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR A SUCCESSFUL 2004

Remarkably, it's time once again to reflect on our efforts of the past year and to look ahead to the challenges of the new year. 2004 has been an extraordinary year for the MPDC and the communities we serve. For the first time since 1986, DC is poised to record fewer than 200 homicides in a year—a remarkable achievement given that, just over a decade ago, our city was enduring close to 500 murders a year. While homicides declined more than 20 percent during 2004, overall crime is down as well—in every major crime category and in all seven police districts, according to preliminary statistics. At the same time, traffic fatalities in our city plummeted 35 percent in 2004—to the lowest level in at least 18 years—while arrests and firearm recoveries have increased. All of these positive trends are the result of one overriding factor: the level of commitment and partnership among police, other city agencies and the community. In May 2004, our Department restructured the Police Service Area (PSA) boundaries, to better match neighborhood boundaries and better support our “Policing for Prevention” (community policing) strategy. Our police officers, supervisors and residents responded to this change with tremendous energy and determination—attending PSA meetings, forming citizen patrols, creating community listservs and getting involved in problem-solving efforts. In addition, under the leadership of Mayor Williams, we launched the “hot spot” initiative that is concentrating police and other city on 14 distinct neighborhoods that have experienced unusually high levels of crime and violence. We also expanded “Operation Fight Back,” regular blitzes that are designed to clean up the conditions that can breed crime and disorder in neighborhoods throughout the District. And we were far more nimble and strategic in how we deploy police resources to address emerging crime problems before they spiral out of control. This was largely the result of our Daily Crime Briefings, in which top personnel review the latest crime data on computerized maps in our Command Center. I do not believe it is simply a coincidence that these and other initiatives coincided with the significant drop in crime that DC experienced in 2004. And we made these gains in neighborhood safety while continuing to help guard our city against the very real threat of terrorism. Of course, the year was not without its challenges and its heartaches. We lost 24 young lives to homicide during 2004—an intolerable loss of life and opportunity. Reducing juvenile crime and violence—both victimization and offending—will be a top priority of the MPDC during 2005. So will driving down the crime rate even further and reducing the level of fear in many of our communities. To achieve these objectives, the MPDC will once again need to rely on our partners in city government and, especially, in the community. For the new year, I encourage all of our residents to get to know your PSA officers, attend PSA meetings and to get involved in other community policing activities. The more our residents are involved, the better and stronger our communities will be. On behalf of the entire MPDC, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the community for your support and assistance throughout the past year. We truly could not have achieved what we did without all of you. And may you enjoy a happy, safe and prosperous 2005.

— Charles H. Ramsey, Chief of Police

- ① Find your police district and PSA by visiting the DC Guide at:  
<http://citizenatlas.dc.gov/atlasapps/reporthometab.aspx>
- ① For ideas on how you can get involved in “Policing for Prevention” during 2005, click on:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/pfp/involved.shtml>

## FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 18 YEARS, DC RECORDS FEWER THAN 200 HOMICIDES IN 2004

For the first time in nearly two decades, DC recorded fewer than 200 murders in a year. There were 198 homicides in the city during 2004 – a decline of 20 percent from the 2003 year-end total of 248. The last time DC recorded fewer than 200 murders in a year was back in 1986, when there were 194. The 2004 total is less than half of the 1994 figure of 399, and is nearly 60 percent lower than the 1991 figure of 482, which was the all-time high for murders in DC. Except for the Second District, all police districts recorded reductions in homicide during 2004; in 2D, there were three homicides in 2004 (the lowest among all districts), up from 2 the previous year. Preliminary data show that firearms were used in 77 percent of the homicides in 2004; knives were used in just under 10 percent of the murders. Both figures are similar to percentages from recent years. The most common motives behind the homicides in 2004 were arguments, retaliation, drugs and robberies. Nearly 96 percent of the 2004 homicide victims were African-American (84 percent male, 12 percent female). Twenty-four of the year's victims were juveniles, age 17 or younger. That was double the 2003 total of juvenile victims, which was 12. Four juveniles were arrested for murder in 2004. The homicide closure rate for 2004 was just over 60 percent, largely unchanged from the 2003 level.

## SPOTLIGHT ON...DC'S SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

The Sex Offender Registration Act of 1999 established a sex offender registration program for DC and authorized the MPDC to release sex offender information to the public. This law requires a person convicted, or found not guilty by reason of insanity, of certain sex offenses to register with the District, provided the individual lives, works, or attends school here. Generally speaking, an offense requiring registration is a felony sexual assault (regardless of the age of the victim); an offense involving sexual abuse or exploitation of minors; or sexual abuse of wards, patients, or clients. The Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) completes the initial registration. The MPDC is responsible for making available to the public information regarding sex offenders, including residence, business or school address and the conviction offense that required registration. Under DC law, sex offenders are classified as Class A, B or C offenders—with Class A being the most serious offenders. A list of Class A and B registered sex offenders is provided on the MPDC website as a service to the community. In addition, community members can visit any police station or the Sex Offender Registry Unit and inspect a public registry that contains information on all registered sex offenders (Class A, B and C) in DC. The MPDC reminds residents that information from the Sex Offender Registry is to be used responsibly to promote public safety. Under no circumstances may the information be used to commit a crime against a person listed in the Registry or to engage in illegal discrimination or harassment against such a person.

## NEWS & NOTES

**Police Accountability Agency Changes Name.** Effective January 1, 2005, the Office of Citizen Complaint Review (OCCR), DC's police accountability agency, is officially renamed the Office of Police Complaints. OCCR's five-member governing body, the Citizen Complaint Review Board (CCRB), is simultaneously renamed the Police Complaints Board (PCB). The Mayor and DC Council recently enacted legislation to rename the agency in order to more clearly convey the agency's mission. The OPC will continue to provide an independent, fair and impartial forum for the review and resolution of certain police misconduct complaints filed by the public against MPDC and DC Housing Authority Police Department (DCHAPD) officers. Details on the name change are at [http://occr.dc.gov/occr/cwp/view,a,1199,q,621519,occrNav\\_GID,1470.asp](http://occr.dc.gov/occr/cwp/view,a,1199,q,621519,occrNav_GID,1470.asp)

① Get the latest DC homicide figures at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/crstats.shtm>

① For the first time in several years, the MPDC recovered more than 2,000 firearms during 2004. By year end, police had seized close to 2,100 firearms, compared with 1,982 in 2003.

① For more information about DC's Sex Offender Registry, and to access the online list of registered Class A and B offenders, go to:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/sor/sor.shtm>

① Parents and others who want more information about protecting children from sexual predators are encouraged to review some basic safety tips, available at:  
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/sor/childsafetytips.shtm>

### DATA BOX

<b>Homicides</b>	<b>as of 12/31/04</b>
◆ 2004: 198	
◆ 2003: 248	
◆ % Change: -20.2%	
◆ Closure Rate: 60.1% (119 closures)	
<b>Adult Arrests</b>	<b>week end. 12/25/04</b>
◆ Total: 597	
◆ Drugs: 102	
◆ Weapons: 16	
◆ Motor Vehicle Theft: 13	
◆ Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 22	
<b>Juvenile Activity</b>	<b>week end. 12/25/04</b>
◆ Arrests: 45	
◆ Curfew Violations: 16	
◆ Truants: 21	
<b>Firearm Recoveries</b>	<b>as of 12/29/04</b>
◆ December: 170	
◆ 2004 Total: 2,057	
<b>Traffic Fatalities</b>	<b>as of 12/31/04</b>
◆ 2004: 45	
◆ 2003: 69	
◆ % Change: -34.8%	

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at [kevin.morison@dc.gov](mailto:kevin.morison@dc.gov). Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

**mpdc.dc.gov**